

Religion and the West: Collision or Conversation?

Tutors: Dr Tony Ellis and Tajul Islam

Synopsis

There are those on both sides who claim that Western society and religion are inevitably in collision with each other; but is this really the case? Is religion bound to be at odds with secular thinking? Is it inevitable that modern society must discount religious belief as an unwelcome relic from the past?

This day will explore these very contemporary issues as they first became matters of contention both for Christianity and Islam in the lively controversies of the 19th century. In particular, we shall discuss some thinkers from both traditions who have ventured into dialogue rather than confrontation with the challenges of modern thinking.

Biographies:

Dr Tony Ellis

Tony Ellis is an experienced adult educator who is interested in exploring the wide-ranging ways in which modern people engage with religious aspirations and concerns, not just through formal religious affiliation, but also through secular explorations of meaning in literature or art. His work is rooted in study of theology from western Christian traditions.

Tajul Islam

Tajul Islam holds a degree in Arabic Islamic Studies and is currently on a Phd programme at the University of Exeter. He has also studied in traditional Islamic seminaries under renowned scholars and his pursuit for Sacred Knowledge has led him on extensive journeys in the Middle East and North Africa. His areas of interest are Islamic History, Islamic Law, Qur'anic Exegesis, Arabic linguistics, and his primary focus is on Islamic Theology. In addition to his academic credentials Tajul is actively involved in community based work and has been a faith advisor for the University of Bradford and has been invited by the Home Office on numerous occasions on the Community Cohesion programmes.